

Michaud Requests Expedited Approval for Assistance for over 1,100 Maine Workers from 21 Companies

Monday, May 18 2009

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Mike Michaud sent a letter to U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis requesting that her agency expedite the review and approval of Maine’s recent applications for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). “The applications submitted today were from all over our state,”

said Michaud. “These filings illustrate that the economic downturn knows no boundaries and that the threat our companies face from unfair trade continues to mount.”

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Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is a Department of Labor program that helps workers who have lost their jobs as a result of increased imports or a shift of production outside of the United States. TAA provides trade-affected workers with a variety of reemployment services and benefits to help them find new jobs and get back to work. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (H.R. 1) increased training funds available to states and made training, healthcare and reemployment benefits more accessible and flexible.

“In Maine, we have continued to face lost jobs, a faltering economy, and industries moving overseas,” Michaud wrote in his letter. “As you are aware, the pressure of overseas competition has hit many industries hard and it has a profound impact, especially in more rural states like Maine. It is absolutely crucial that these workers receive certification under the TAA program.”

The full text of Michaud’s letter to Secretary Solis is attached.

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May 18, 2009

The Honorable Hilda Solis

Secretary

U.S. Department of Labor

Frances Perkins Building
Third and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

I am writing to offer my strongest support for the 21 Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petitions that were submitted this morning by the Maine Department of Labor for determination under the new trade law which goes into effect today. These would potentially cover 1,139 Maine laid off workers. I am writing to request that you do all you can to expedite the review and approval of this application.

The list below indicates all the firms that applied for TAA under the new TAA program:

Company, Town, Number of Workers

Maine Woods, Portage Lake, 14

Prime Tanning, Hartland, 17

Formtek, Clinton, 23

American Pride, Guilford, 20

Kelly Lumber, Ashland, 7

Ethan Allen, Andover, 9

Sappi, Westbrook, 30

Boralex Sherman, Stacyville, 20

Parker Hannifan/Nichols, Portland, 50

New Page, Rumford, 130

Domtar, Baileyville, 280

Folghum Fibres, Baileyville, 40

Vescom Corporation, Baileyville, 15

Wausau Paper, Jay, 96

IBEW, Lewiston, 106

Woodstructures, Biddeford, 175

Tex Tech Industries, No. Monmouth, 15

Modern Woodcrafters, Lewiston, 29

Columbia Forest Prod., Presque Isle, 43

Maine Wood Recyc., Ashland, 10

Fairchild Semi/Running Hill Rd, So. Portland, 10

In Maine, we have continued to face lost jobs, a faltering economy, and industries moving overseas. As you are aware, the pressure of overseas competition has hit many industries hard and it has a profound impact, especially in more rural states like Maine.

These layoffs and shutdowns significantly affect workers and families who, through no fault of their own, face uncertainty in their employment and financial security. During the economic downturn, it has been increasingly difficult for these workers to find gainful employment. Most will face agonizingly difficult choices relating to employment retraining and job relocation, which will be further exacerbated by the harsh economic challenges associated with historically high energy prices, higher food prices, and our ongoing national economic downturn.

It is absolutely crucial that these workers receive certification under the TAA program. TAA funds will help greatly with this transition, and help better protect the workers and the community from future losses. I request that you review these TAA applications in a timely manner to ensure that the workers receive the assistance they need to mitigate the employment instability and to help reduce the negative affects that foreign trade has had on their financial security.

Thank you for your time and consideration on behalf of the workers across the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Michaud

Member of Congress